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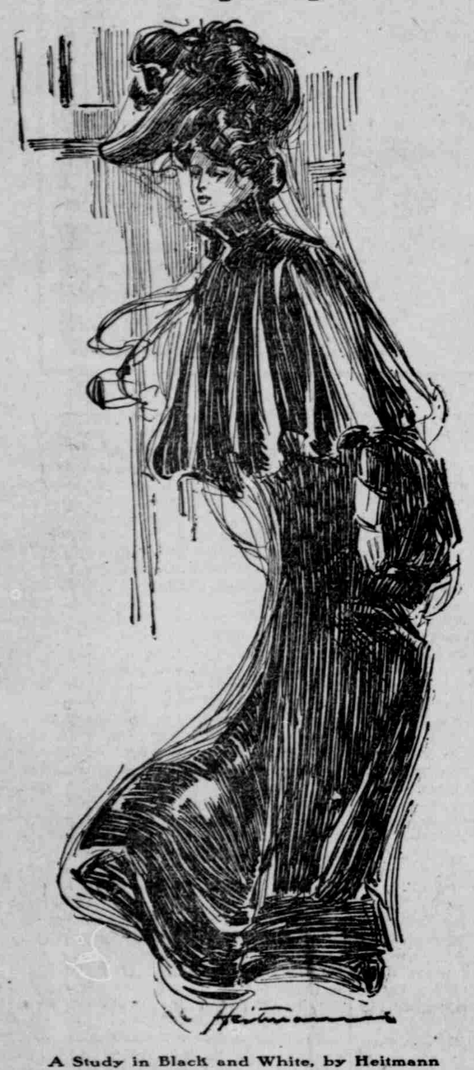
Newspaper Artists and Their Work the Public Seldom Sees

Men Who Make Cartoons and Portraits for a Living Do Many Clever Things with Pencil and Brush for Love of Their Art



A Study in Black and White, by Heitmann

"THE Newspaper Artists' Society of Indianapolis announces its first annual loan and sale exhibition of original drawings and paintings, to be held at the Claypool Hotel, Jan. 4, 1904."

The above announcement, which has been sent out to a number of the lovers and patrons of art in Indianapolis, heralds an exhibition which will be unique, in that the pictures shown will be the work of the local fraternity. To the general public the newspaper artist is a vague personality, sheltered behind his initials or an inconspicuous signature, except in a few cases, such for instance as John T. McCutcheon, who has stepped out from the privacy of his studio to meet the public face to face on the lecture platform. The artist is, as a rule, a retiring soul and a poor advertiser of himself and his wares. The artistic temperament and business push and acumen are not usually found in his company. His work the public sees and appreciates. Concerning the man himself, there is only a vague curiosity and abstract conception. Indeed, it is safe to say that many of the readers of our large dailies do not even consider the newspaper worker to be an artist of any merit, and consequently the holding of such a sale and loan exhibition as this is a wise move, not only to help business, but also to bring the public into closer touch with the select coterie who are gaining a position in modern journalism of steadily growing importance. It will furnish, as well, a complete object lesson as to the variety, progress and quality of newspaper and magazine illustration in this literary and art center of the Middle States.

The illustrated London News, established over a half century ago, was the first systematic attempt to illustrate news, subordinating in a manner its letterpress to its pictures. In this country appeared the first illustrated daily known to journalism, and its pictures created quite a sensation. However, the expense was so great that the life of the publication was of comparatively short duration. Since the days of its early issues with their crude wood cuts and line drawings, news illustration has been undergoing a wonderful transformation. To-day the elaborate and finished products of modern lithography and engraving reproduce the artistic original drawings with great nicety and have become an indispensable feature of popular cosmopolitan journalism and magazine work. Indeed, many of the magazines and newspapers in this country and in England owe their financial success more to the artist and the engraver than to the reporter or story writer. The up-to-date newspaper of to-day must contain illustrations. The business man who reads his paper hurriedly on his way to his office; the working man with his morning paper on his way to his daily toil, or the professional man, with perhaps more leisure—all demand that they shall see the scenes of which they are reading. The cartoonist occupies an important place in newspaper work; his picture, whether political or illustrating some event of the day, is an editorial without words, and oftentimes accomplishes more than a column of excellently worded English. The charm of pictorial rendering and the personal interpretation have an attractiveness peculiarly their own, which no other medium of expression quite possesses. The readier and simpler process of half-tone illustration, working in conjunction with the reporter's camera, may give greater accuracy at times possibly, but it is at the expense of the personal touch, the artistic feeling, the humanity of it all, just as the mind differs from the machine. For the brain working through the hand has the ineffable charm which no mechanical art can ever hope to secure; hence it is that there will always be a place in illustrated journalism for the war artist who makes rough sketches at the seat of the battle as well as for the elaborate black-and-white draughtsman who works at home. Nor only on the battle field is the artist indispensable. The presidential inauguration, the convening of Congress, the funeral of some prominent personage, or some vast railway accident—all of these demand his presence.

To-day illustration is the regular profession of a number of men and women who find in it a source of income that permits them to paint pictures according to individual taste, without regard to the question of popularity with the public. Hence it is that a majority of the artists who will exhibit at the coming exhibition are, for the most part, painters as well as illustrators. Work of any kind to be presented to the public has certain limitations imposed upon it—the limitations of material, space, style, time and censorship. The draughtsman, like the reporter on a newspaper, must confine himself to these limitations. The newspaper artist has to contend with the necessity for haste in doing his work. A fire occurs three or four hours before going to press. The artist has hurriedly to sketch the scene, give it life and verisimilitude and turn it over for a rush job by the engraver within an hour's time. He has to catch the characteristic pose and expression of a public speaker during a five-minute oration, and reproduce them accurately in his sketchbook. Or, perhaps, he is called up at midnight to view some mutilated corpse at the morgue and sketch the ghastly features for the morning issue. He is called on to work at high pressure and under adverse conditions of wind and weather. In fact, the regular newspaper artist, like the newspaper reporter, is called upon to do rapid and good work under the most trying conditions. The reading public, who sees the results a few hours afterwards and obtains from the illustration perhaps a more vivid idea of the event depicted than from the pen-picture of the reporter, rarely appreciates the limitations with which the artist has successfully coped. There must also be taken into consideration the drawbacks of printing on cheap paper, and with a press running 48,000 copies to the hour.

While the scientifically trained illustrators are few, the number of persons of both sexes who have begun to draw for the daily papers, for advertisements, for illustrated books, is steadily growing to large proportions.

At the forthcoming exhibition the pictures will include illustrations in oils, water colors, wash drawings, black and white, line drawings, cartoons, caricatures; in fact, almost every medium known to the modern illustrator. The specimens shown will be the originals of some of their best efforts, and will prove a revelation as to the character and excellence of the work done in this line of newspaper illustrations.

The young men are very much encouraged at the progress which they have made so far and the exhibition bids fair to be a social as well as a financial success. Many of the prominent citizens of Indianapolis have already signified their willingness to act as patrons, and with such encouragement there is no possibility of failure. Among those who have signified their willingness to co-operate with this work are the following:

Albert Lieber, D. M. Parry, Thomas Taggart, M. B. Wilson, H. J. Milligan, Julius A. Lemcke, Col. Smiley N. Chambers, Joseph C. Schaf, D. W. Parry, S. P. Sheerin, Herman Lieber, Mayor John Holtzman, Thomas C. Day, Dr. Frederick Charlton, Frank Van Camp, Dr. George J. Cook, Harold B. Hibben, Capt. William E. English, Charles A. Sudlow, Volney T. Malott, J. A. Rink, George J. Marott, Charles W. Miller, Dr. John F. Barnhill, F. M. Ayres, Congressman Jesse Overstreet, H. J. Rhein, Charles N. Williams, Oscar D. Bohlen, and others.

A brief biography of the local knights of the mahl-stick may not prove uninteresting. The dean of the corps is Frank S. Bowers, of the News, who was born at Silverton, Ore., Dec. 28, 1872. Bowers is one of the cleverest cartoonists in the country. He says that since his earliest recollection and even earlier, according to his parents' story, he formed an absolute aversion for manual labor, but in spite of this aversion he has farmed, drilled artesian wells, made photographs and even tried to be a "broncho buster," but being unable to stick to the hurricane deck of a pitching horse, was not only fired from there but from his job as well. With added years came added dislike for farm work, and the belief within him grew stronger that his hands were better fitted to hold the brush and palette than to grasp the handles of a plow; so, at the age of twenty, he decided to launch himself upon the sea of art. For about a year he spent his time endeavoring to produce portraits of calves and pigs and of the people of his acquaintance. In July, 1896, Bowers received from his cousin, Homer C. Davenport, one of the best known cartoonists in this country, who at that time was at the head of the art department of the San Francisco Examiner, a letter asking him to come there to work. After two years on the Examiner, he went to the New York Journal, where he remained until 1900, and then came to the News, where he has since been. His work is not only known in Indianapolis, but is appreciated throughout newspaperdom.

George Brehm is an Indiana boy, born in 1878 in Anderson. After finishing his education in the schools of Noblesville, he went to New York and for four years studied in the Art Students' League. He had for his teachers such men as Twachtman, George Bridgeman, Decamp and Howard Chandler Christy, and during this time did a great deal of work for several of the leading magazines and publishing houses. There is probably no better man in the newspaper field for portraiture than Brehm. After leaving New York he entered the Indiana University as a special student, confining his work to the fine arts. After completing his course at that institution, he intended to return to New York, but was induced to take a position on the Star, which was then just about to be brought out.

The Journal's cartoonist is Jack Smith. Jack and his dog, "Calamity," are known to every reader of newspapers in Indiana. "Calamity" and Albert Mitchell's "newsboy" and Griswold's "rabbit" are trade marks that always appear in their cartoons. Mr. Samuel R. Smith, the father, died when Jack was about five years of age. Later the family moved to Bloomington, Ind., where the two brothers, Charles and John, entered the State University. Jack took mathematics as a major study, but becoming dissatisfied, elected philosophy under Dr. W. L. Bryan. His work during the time was more or less interrupted, owing to the hours which he devoted to outside work in order to be self-sustaining. It is rather remarkable that in his chosen study he should have found his work in life, for it was at the suggestion of a professor of philosophy that he first submitted his drawings to papers at home and abroad. He had phenomenal success in finding a sale for his pictures from the start, and so concluded that if people were willing to "pay for such stuff," he was willing to continue turning it out. After five years in the university, he came to Indianapolis, where he took up illustrating. He became the regular cartoonist of the Indianapolis Press, in which paper appeared some of the best work of that time; in fact, it was so good that it was reproduced in several magazines throughout the country. At the time of the suspension of the Press, he was called to the Nashville News to take charge of its cartoon and art work. He resigned from this position to come to the Indianapolis Journal, where he has been for more than two years.

To the Indianapolis public there is probably no better known illustrator than Frank McKinney Hubbard, or, as his friends refer to him, "Kin" Hubbard, born at Bellefontaine, O., as he says, a long time ago. He learned the printer's trade in his father's newspaper office, and later went into the mail service at the beginning of Cleveland's administration, where he remained for some five years; after that he took up newspaper work, and has been a caricaturist in Dayton, Cincinnati, Mansfield and Indianapolis ever since. In connection with his accomplishments he combines the virtue of being a "good fellow." Probably the most artistic work "Kin" Hubbard has ever done was during the week of the Elks' Mardi Gras, where he produced the marvelous makeup of "Bess," and it is also said that he was responsible for various other freaks. However, justice must prevail. On Saturday afternoon Hubbard was arrested by the Elks' patrol and hauled to the court and there fined $2 for masquerading as an artist. Hubbard's work is always good, and even in his caricatures the likeness is always maintained. His more serious work is done in colors.

Franklin Booth comes from near Noblesville and is the son of stanch country parents. The greater part of his life up to his twenty-fifth year was spent on a farm in the prosperous Quaker settlement known to the world as Gray. Booth is, for the most part, self-taught. Early, while yielding shovel and plow in hard toil, he became an ardent student of nature, as one artistically inclined would study nature, and a lover of the poets, and all of his first earned dollars were spent for books. Besides being an artist, Booth writes some verse, although making no pretensions in that line, and his illustrated poems have occasionally appeared in Chicago, Boston and New York publications. His first sale, a Thanksgiving poem, which was later republished in Boston with a pen and ink decoration, was to the Indianapolis News. This was previous to any training in a regular art school and was followed by others, and being thus encouraged he went to the Art Institute of Chicago for a short time. While there he did some work for the then Chicago Record and the D. C. Cook Publishing Company. The following year he went to the Art Students' League, in New York, for a term in the day and night classes. Since then, for two years, he has worked successfully in New York and but recently returned to remain a while in his home State. Booth seems to have absorbed some of the substantial character and conscientiousness of the Quaker environments of his early manhood, which now manifest themselves in careful, serious work.

J. B. Gruelle, of the Star, was born Dec. 24, 1880, in Illinois. Four years ago he began his newspaper work on the Indianapolis People, and after about a year spent on that paper, he accepted an offer from the Sun, remaining with them for nine months. He then took up the teaching of art at the Indianapolis Business College. He devoted one summer to studying landscape from the tops of boxcars, and from another excellent point of vantage which is extremely popular with a certain class of tourists, namely, the brake beam. He then took up commercial illustrating, but after a year decided to go back to newspaper work, and for a second time became a member of the staff of the Sun. Later he spent a year with the Peninsular Engraving Company, of Detroit, but having a preference for his home city, returned and took a position on the Star. Mr. Gruelle's work has been extremely varied and he has not as yet taken up any single line of illustrating.

W. F. Heitmann, who is at the head of the art department of the Sentinel, began his art work in 1895 as a student in the old Art School conducted by W. Forsyth. While at this school he received an excellent offer from the Indiana Illustrating Company, which he accepted and held for about two years, when he went to the News to do general illustrative work and special assignments. At the time the Press was started he accepted an offer from them and remained with that paper until it was discontinued. For the past two and a half years he has been on the Sentinel. Besides regular newspaper illustrating, Mr. Heitmann has done a great deal of book illustrations for prominent publishers and also magazine work. This work and also pictures, which he has exhibited, have received much favorable comment.

Another artist on the Sentinel is Roland J. Scott, who is one of the youngest of the craft in Indianapolis. He studied with George Frink, who is now on the staff of the Daily News, of Chicago. Like Heitmann, he too was in the employ of the Indiana Illustrating Company, where he remained for a year before going to the Anderson Herald, which paper he left to join the Daily News. From this position he came to the Sentinel, where he has been ever since. Mr. Scott's specialty in the line of newspaper illustrating is "comics," and he has made excellent progress and no little reputation.

The South also has a representative among the Indianapolis newspaper artists in Albert Clare Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell was born in Tennessee and for eight years was employed on the Commercial Appeal of Memphis. His work was most excellent, and, in fact, attracted so much notice that he was asked to go to New York, which he did, but after spending a year on the New York Journal he left to do independent work. Tiring of the East, he came to this city and joined the Sentinel staff. His cartoon work is always strong.

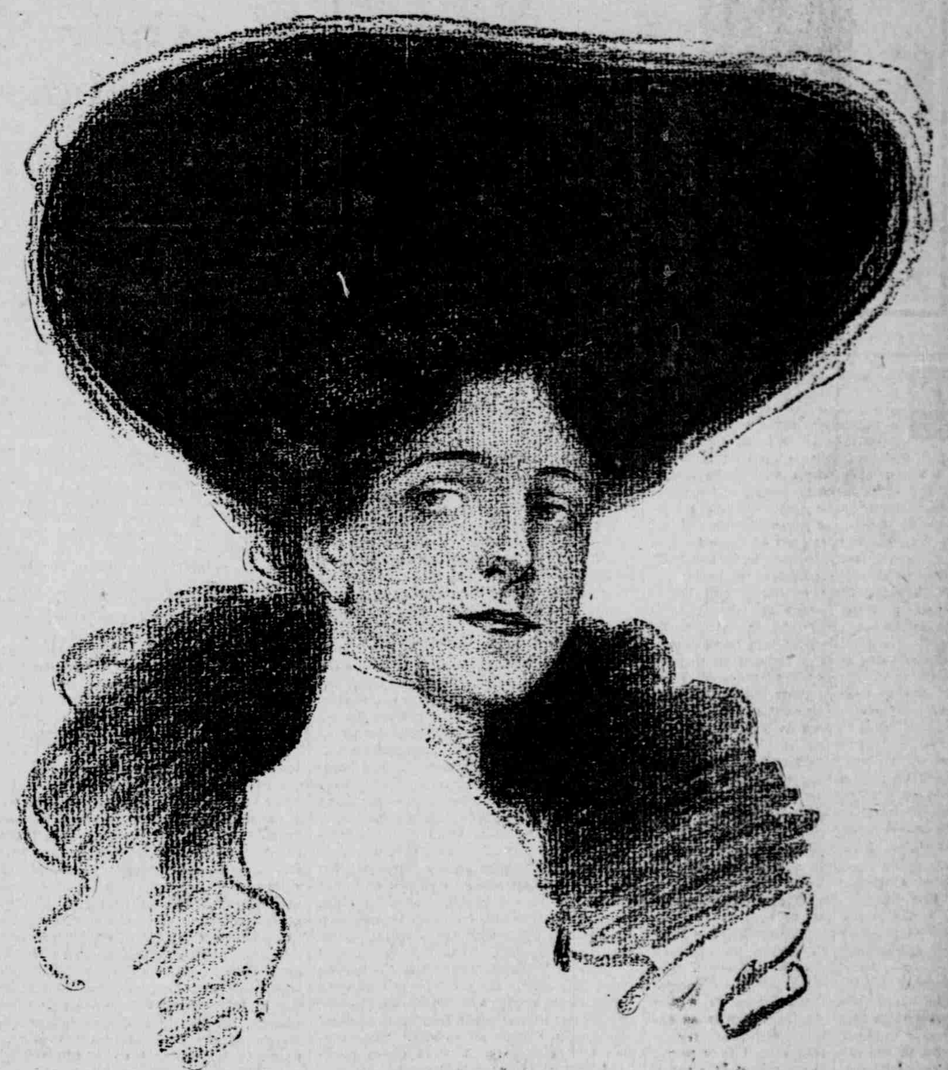
The work of the cartoonist is peculiar in that he often draws pictures that do not embody his personal feelings toward the person to whom they are directed, or to the subject which he depicts. He stands in the same position as does the man who is working in the reportorial department of a paper whose political policy differs from his own personal convictions. He must subordinate his own views to those of the paper on which he is employed, and, forgetting his own party affiliations for the time, present political matters without bias. This is not always an easy task, but is one frequently required of newspaper employes, and they gradually acquire a philosophy which makes them independent of prejudice. They very properly look upon the matter as one of business entirely. So must the cartoonist do his work. He draws his picture from the standpoint of his paper, and hence it is, if the public but knew it, many of the sharpest and most radical political cartoons are drawn by men who are personally diametrically opposed to ideas which they portray.

There are accidents, or perhaps a better way to put it would be to say circumstances, which sometimes result in a hit. For instance, such a thing happened to Mr. John McCutcheon, who lectured before the Boys' Club in Indianapolis one evening last week. Every one who knows McCutcheon's cartoons knows McCutcheon's "dog." The birth of this dog happened in this manner. After drawing a cartoon Mr. McCutcheon found that he had a vacant space, and to fill it up he drew a dog, a comic, unnatural sort of beast, the like of which had never been seen by the eyes of mortal man. The next day the artist found that the picture he was making had another vacant corner, so he put in another dog, and this second "fice" seemed to have a sort of family resemblance to the first. The dogs "caught on" and so Mr. McCutcheon retained them. This dog became so popular that plaster casts were made of him and used as little ornaments.

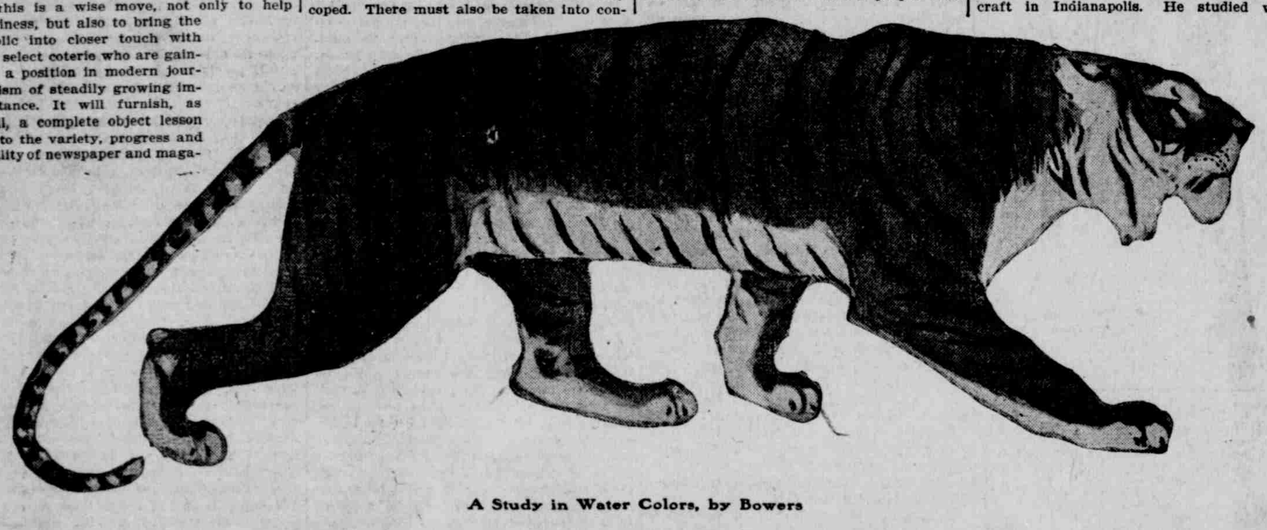
An Eastern artist, whose work is very much like Mr. George Brehm's in that he works rapidly and gets most wonderful likenesses from life, had the misfortune to suffer a stroke of paralysis, which affected his right side, not only the motor muscles, but also the eyesight and vocal chords. After he had recovered from the primary shock he set to work with infinite patience to learn to work with the left hand and now, although much slower in his execution, his work is almost as good as it was before his awful misfortune. His disposition is still as sunny as it was when he was in the prime of his artistic career and physical condition.

The newspaper artist is brought into all sorts of plans and into contact with all sorts and conditions of men and at times his work plays a most important part in the day's events.

There occurred in Canada, one day last summer, a suicide which was shrouded with mystery. The unfortunate man had destroyed every evidence of his identity. Those who saw him were unable to throw any light upon whom he might have been. That he had evidently been a man of some importance was evidenced by his clothing, his refined appearance and the texture of his hands. One of the papers sent one of the art department to make a sketch of the deceased. By the dim light of the morgue lamp, and surrounded by the grewsome objects of the place, the artist made his picture, and the following day it appeared. Many said this was an example of yellow journalism, but it served a good end, nevertheless, for a sister of the dead man happened to pick up the paper while on a train going to Ottawa, and recognized the features of her brother.



A Study in Crayon, by Brehm



A Study in Water Colors, by Bowers

A Pen and Ink Study, by Smith

A Natural History Study

THE HOME OF AN OWL

By Ernest Harold Baynes

ONE afternoon last winter, after a long stretch of very cold, snowy weather, the storm clouds parted and the sun shone out bright and warm. And as it shone, it lighted up the top of a dark pine tree which stretched upwards out of a gloomy wood, and it warmed the south side of a large nest of leaves and twigs which rested in the upper branches. And a big gray squirrel who had been curled up asleep inside for many days felt the grateful warmth, and arose, stretching and yawning, to take a look from the doorway, a round hole in the wall of the nest. Then he ran out upon a branch to the tip of it, leaped ten clear feet to the outstretched limb of another tree, and after circling the trunk a few times to get his legs in working order, he lay down along a horizontal branch, with one fore and one hind leg hanging down on either side, and took a sun bath. By and by he jumped to another tree, and thence to the ground to hunt for a nut, which he seemed to remember having hidden somewhere near by. And he found it, too, under the snow, close to the base of a rock, and when he had eaten it he raced through the tree tops for a time before hunting for another one. And so he spent that bright winter afternoon, playing and feeding until the sun was far over in the West. Within the wood it was already growing dark when he started for his home and his bed in the top of the old pine tree. He had not far to go—some twenty-five feet, perhaps—and he was bounding along over the snow, when a dark shadow fell across his path. For one instant he heard the "fluff-fluff" of mighty wings, and had one glimpse of a pair of fierce yellow eyes, and then came a moment's terrible pain, before his life was crushed out by the talons of a great horned owl.

The savage bird looked up from his victim, and, turning his head, looked sharply on all sides of him as though to see if any one had witnessed the deed. Then he looked down again, apparently satisfied that he was unobserved. Holding the limp squirrel with his feet, he bent over, and, half shutting his eyes, began fingering the body with his bill. Presently he found the place he was feeling for, and there was a distinct "crack" as he broke the backbone with a single bite. Again and yet again came that ominous cracking sound, and when the owl began to devour his prey piecemeal. But first of all he pulled out a few tufts of thick gray fur in order to get at the skin, and then he literally tore the animal in pieces, which he jerked backward into his throat and swallowed with much gaping and gulping. When he had finished his meal, nothing but the hind quarters remained, and these he picked up in his bill and flew off with. The first convenient landing place happened to be the now deserted nest of his victim, and here he alighted and tucked the remains of his supper firmly between the nest and one of the branches which supported it.

The following afternoon, as the horned owl was roosting in a large dark evergreen tree, he slowly opened his mouth and very solemnly ejected a solid pellet about two inches long containing the bones and fur which he had swallowed with his meal the night before. Then he began to preen his plumage, drawing his tail and wing feathers through his bill, slowly and precisely. Next he turned his attention to his feet, and went over each toe separately, biting hard at the big, hooked claws, to make sure that all were smooth and in good condition. After that he lifted one foot after the other, opening and closing the talons two or three times, and then, as if satisfied that everything was in order, away he flew on powerful, silent wings. He alighted once more on the deserted squirrel's nest, and after looking about him with his usual caution, dragged out the remains of his last night's victim, and soon there was nothing left but the bushy tail, which was caught by a puff of wind and blown to the ground. After that, the owl seemed to develop a liking for that particular nest, and many were the squirrels, mice and small birds brought there to be devoured. And the top of the nest became flattened and owl pellets accumulated on and around it. Sometimes another great horned owl appeared, and toward the latter part of February the two were often seen together. Early in March the old squirrel's nest had been converted into a bird's nest, and in it were three large white eggs, from which, in due time, issued three large-headed, downy young horned owls, for whom their parents were obliged to do even more killing than usual.

One day the nest was discovered by a bird student, whose name we won't mention, and he, on study bent, went boldly up the tree. He had not gone far, however, when his cap was torn from his head by one of the angry parent birds, and as there seemed every prospect of hostilities being renewed, he came slithering down again. He procured a fencing mask, and, with his face thus protected, made another attempt, and after being savagely attacked, succeeded in reaching the nest. There lay the top-heavy young owls, comically serious youngsters, blinking disdainfully at the bird student, who examined them quickly but carefully, and left them to their fond parents in order to avoid any further unpleasantness.

Well guarded and well fed, the young owls grew large and strong. They soon changed their plumage of down for one of feathers, and were out earning a living with their own good talons, at a season when most of our birds have scarcely begun to think of nest-building.

At present essence of roses is almost the only article exported to the United States from Bulgaria, and agricultural machines are almost the only direct imports from the United States.